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For Immediate Release: July 14, 2003

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Kernan Announces Grants to Train 412 Workers at Four East Central Indiana Companies

INDIANAPOLIS — Lt. Governor Joe Kernan announced today that four east central Indiana companies will benefit from training grants from the Indiana Department of Commerce's Skills Enhancement Fund.

"The continued improvement of a company's workforce is critical to their overall success and ability to compete. These grants allow them to make these much needed investments," said Kernan, who leads the state's economic development efforts, serving as director of the Indiana Department of Commerce. "We are proud to support their efforts, as we seek to energize our economy."

- **Alcan Composites USA Inc.**, Richmond, received a \$9,650 grant to train six new and 28 incumbent employees following its \$865,000 investment in equipment upgrades. Alcan manufactures lightweight, inexpensive sandwich board foam with an extruded polystyrene core that can be used in picture framing and interior signs. They offer heat activated Foam-X, pressure sensitive Foam-X and Foam-XPS for specific uses. Training in electrical systems, forklift operation, hydraulics and quality control procedures will be offered as a result of the grant.
- **Alphabet**, Portland, received a \$64,000 grant to train 125 new and 97 existing employees in conjunction with the company's \$1.5 million investment to purchase new equipment. Originally dedicated to building wiring harnesses for Cadillac in 1986, Alphabet has since grown to service Buick, Oldsmobile and Pontiac. As a result of the Commerce grant, QS 9000, an essential quality management system for the automotive industry, will be offered.
- **Beckett Bronze Co. Inc.**, Muncie, has received a \$3,750 grant to train 46 incumbent associates as a part of the company's \$20,000 investment in new equipment. Founded in 1913 as an aluminum foundry, Beckett Bronze manufactures cast bronze, cylindrically shaped, precision machined parts and continuous cast bars and tubes in numerous alloys and shapes. Using the grant, the company will train employees in lean manufacturing techniques and quality control procedures.

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- **Pepsi-Cola General Bottlers of Indiana, Inc.**, Muncie, has been awarded a \$34,000 grant to train 110 incumbent employees as part of a \$1.8 million investment in land and equipment upgrades. Pepsi-Cola is the third largest soft drink bottler in the world, with the Muncie distribution site being one of the most significant in the Midwest. The company operates manufacturing, distribution, bottling, refurbishment and vending centers throughout the world. Pepsi-Cola will provide employees certification in Automotive Service Excellence, as well as training in problem solving, computer skills, warehousing and cross training.

The Commerce department awards Skills Enhancement Fund grants to Indiana companies that undertake capital investment projects. The grants help defray the costs of training new and current employees in basic work skills and company-specific skills necessary to support the project. Companies interested in learning more about the Skills Enhancement Fund or other Commerce programs should contact the Economic Development Division at 800.463.8081, or visit the Web site at www.indianacommerce.com.

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